Checklist and Seasonal Status of the Birds of Algonquin Provincial Park

Algonquin Park Technical Bulletin No. 9

$1.25

Acknowledgements

This checklist is based on many years of bird observation by the naturalist staff of the Park Museum and countless visitors to Algonquin. The invaluable contribution of all these birders is gratefully acknowledged. Helpful suggestions concerning the checklist provided by R.J. Pittaway, M.W.P. Runtz, and R.D. Strickland were much appreciated. Finally, H. Lang-Runtz was very helpful in the design and editing process.

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Cover Photo: Gray Jay *(Perisoreus canadensis)*, one of the northern species sought by birders in Algonquin Park. (Dan Strickland)

Checklist and Seasonal Status of the Birds of Algonquin Provincial Park

1990

by Ron Tozer

Algonquin Provincial Park's rich diversity in birds is reflected in the fact that 258 species have been recorded h e to date, with a full 134 species having been known to breed. About 90 species are considered to be common summer or permanent residents.

The Park is a vast tract of forests and lakes covering nearly 7,600 square kilometres in the part of Ontario situated between Georgian Bay and the Ottawa River. Algonquin lies in a transition zone between the broad-leaved, hardwood forests of the south and the coniferous forests of the north.

Both these major forest types meet and can be found side by side at hundreds of places within the Park's boundaries. The northern coniferous forests are accentuated even more in Algonquin by the fact that the Park lies on a broad dome whose elevations reach as high as 585 metres (1900 feet) above sea level and are typically 200 metres (650 feet) above the surrounding country. This makes for a colder, wetter and snowier climate in the Park that favours northern bird species as well. Thus we have such birds as the Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, and Spruce Grouse here in Algonquin and at the same time such southerners as the Indigo Bunting, Brown Thrasher, and Wood Thrush.

This publication is intended for the active birder seeking detailed information on the occurrence and seasonal status of Algonquin's birds. Readers wishing to learn more about the Park's common birds and their special adaptations for making a living in Algonquin's varied habitats are referred to *"Birds of Algonquin Provincial Park"*—featuring colour photographs of 77 common species. It is available in the bookstores at the Park Museum and the Pioneer Logging Exhibit.

The Checklist

In the following list of 258 species, each bird is given a status based on our judgement of the ease with which it would be found by an observer searching in appropriate habitat. The dates of occurrence outlined in the bar graphs were derived from yearly records accumulated since 1962 by the staff of the Algonquin Park Museum, and from scattered published and unpublished observations going back to the turn of the century. There are specimens or adequate photographs for most of these birds, although some are included on the basis of sight records where written documentation confirmed the bird's identity. The names and arrangement follow the 1983 A.O.U. Checklist, and later supplements. The status of each species is expressed through an acronym or symbol representing the following categories:

- **Common (C)** - likely to be seen every day; present in large numbers (e.g., Red-eyed Vireo) OR lesser numbers but found throughout the area (e.g., Common Loon).

- **Uncommon (U)** - not expected daily, but seen often with repeated visits; always in low numbers (e.g., Spruce Grouse) except flocking species which are sometimes more numerous (e.g.,Bufflehead).

- **Rare (R)** - if present, always in very low numbers and usually very hard to find.

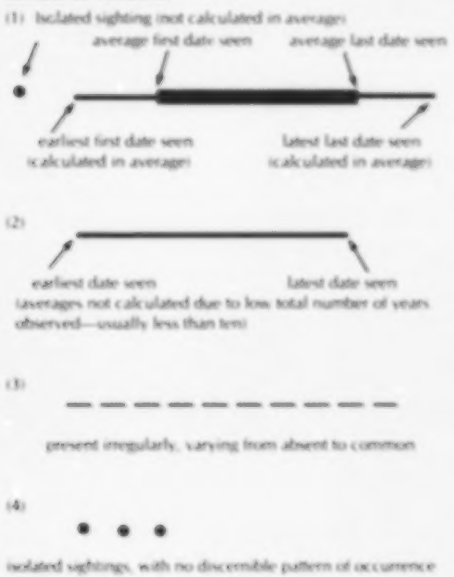
- **Very Rare (VR)** - usually completely absent; status based on very few records.

- **Accidental (A)** - not expected to occur again for many years.

- **Irregular (I)** - present irregularly, varying from absent to common.

- **Breeding (*)** - based on observed nests or flightless young (Total: 134 species).

The dates of occurrence for each species are presented as follows:


(1) Isolated sighting (not calculated in average)
average first date seen
average last date seen
earliest first date seen (calculated in average)
latest last date seen (calculated in average)
(2)
earliest date seen
latest date seen
(averages not calculated due to low total number of years observed—usually less than ten)
(3)
present irregularly, varying from absent to common
(4)
isolated sightings, with no discernible pattern of occurrence

Recommended Birding Areas

Although birding anywhere in Algonquin Park can be rewarding, there are some locations which have proven better for finding certain species. A selection of these areas is presented below. Check the status graphs to determine the best times to find the species mentioned.

Highway 60 Corridor

Sites may be located along Highway 60 by noting the kilometre signs, which are measured from the West Gate (km 0).

- WESTERN UPLANDS BACKPACKING TRAIL (km 3.0). Check the entrance area of this trail near the Oxtongue River (which is bordered by Black Spruce-Balsam Fir forest) for Black-backed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, and Northern Parula. Listen at night from March to May along the Oxtongue River valley for calling Northern Saw-whet Owls.

- WHISKEY RAPIDS TRAIL (km 7.2). Much of this trail runs along the Oxtongue River through coniferous forest. Look for Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee, Brown Creeper, and Northern Parula.

- MIZZY LAKE TRAIL (km 15.4). This 11 km loop trail visits nine small lakes and ponds, which provide excellent chances of seeing moose, beaver, and birds. The Wolf Howl Pond and West Rose Lake sections are particularly good for American Bittern, Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Spruce Grouse, Common Snipe, Black-backed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Boreal Chickadee, Winter Wren, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbird.

- HARDWOOD HILL PICNIC AREA (km 16.7). The hardwood forest here features such birds as Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Least Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, and Scarlet Tanager. After dark, try vocal imitations or recordings to get a response from Barred Owls (here and elsewhere in hardwood forest).

- HEMLOCK BLUFF TRAIL (km 27.2). This trail goes 3.5 km through mixed hardwood and Eastern Hemlock forest which may yield Barred Owl (imitate their calls after dark), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Blackburnian Warbler.

- OLD AIRFIELD (km 30.6). The Old Airfield may be accessed by the Mew Lake Campground entrance road. This large open field with its shrubby borders provides suitable breeding habitat for Killdeer, Brown Thrasher, Yellow Warbler, Savannah Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow and Bobolink. Regular migrants include Horned Lark, American Pipit, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, and Eastern Meadowlark. The Airfield should be thoroughly searched since it has yielded many rarities over the years, from Long-tailed Jaeger to Lark Sparrow!

- LAKE OF TWO RIVERS CAMPGROUND (km 31.8). The mixed pine and White Birch forest of this campground may produce Brown Creeper, Soitary Vireo, and Pine Warbler. At dawn, try the swimming beach for shorebirds, and survey the lake with a telescope for migrant waterfowl (such as scaup, Oldsquaw, Common Goldeneye, and scoters).

- LOOKOUT TRAIL (km 39.7). In addition to a magnificent view, this 1.9 km loop trail may offer soaring Broad-winged Hawks and Common Ravens. Hermit Thrush and Dark-eyed Junco nest along the cliff.

- SPRUCE BOG BOARDWALK (km 42.5). This 1.5 km loop trail with its extensive boardwalk sections affords the most accessible birding for "northern species" along Highway 60. Search along the trail and its bordering open spruce and Balsam Fir forest for Spruce Grouse, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, and Hermit Thrush. Sunday Creek and the adjoining bog here may have American Bittern, Ring-necked Duck, Northern Harrier, Common Nighthawk (overhead), Sedge Wren, and Lincoln's Sparrow.

- OPEONGO LAKE ROAD (km 46.3). There are extensive areas of bog, cattail marsh, and Black Spruce forest along this road, which may produce American Bittern, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Northern Harrier, Spruce Grouse, Whip-poor-will, Black-backed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Swainson's Thrush, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbird.

Grand Lake-Lake Travers Road

This road passes through typical "east side" forests of Algonquin, featuring birch, poplar, and extensive stands of pine (Red, White and Jack). The numbers and types of birds are often quite different from Highway 60. Access is via the Sand Lake Gate which is reached as follows: turn south off the Hwy. 17 bypass onto County Road 26, at a point 3.5 km west of the Forest Lea Road (approximately 9 km west of Pembroke); travel 300 metres, then turn right at the Achray Road and drive 26 km to the Sand Lake Gate.

There are good birding opportunities all along this road, with species such as Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Brown Creeper, Pine Warbler, and Red Crossbill being common. The following areas are particularly worthy of a visit, and may be located along the road by referring to the kilometre signs (e.g. Sand Lake Gate is at km 17.5).

- BARRON CANYON TRAIL (km 28.9). Hermit Thrush occurs along the trail, and listen for Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Northern Waterthrush, and Common Yellowthroat singing in the spectacular canyon.

- ACHRAY ROAD (km 37.8). Turn left along this road and proceed 4.8 km to Achray Campground on Grand Lake. Check the lake by telescope for waterfowl and gulls, and look for shorebirds along the beaches. The campground can be particularly good for Pine Warbler and Red Crossbill.

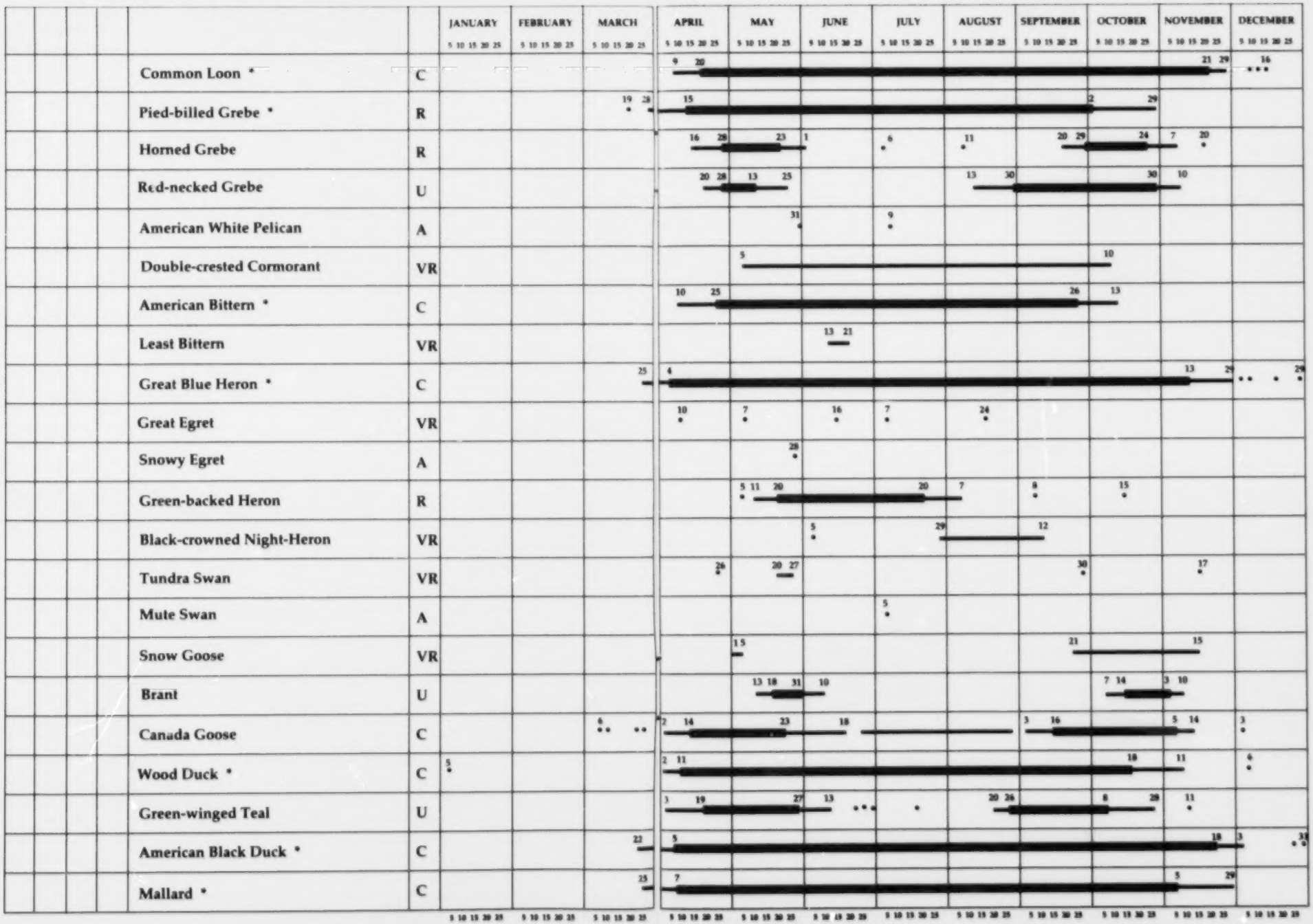
- HYDRO LINE JUNCTION (km 50.0). The open field habitat of this transmission corridor may have Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Eastern Bluebird, and Field Sparrow.

- LAKE TRAVERS (km 70.5). The open Jack Pine barrens here may produce American Kestrel, Merlin, Spruce Grouse, Hermit Thrush, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco. The lake itself is one of the best in Algonquin for migrants such as Red-necked Grebe, scaup, Oldsquaw, scoters, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, and Bonaparte's Gull.

Reporting Rare Birds

Any rare, very rare, or new species observed should be reported to the Interpretive Staff at the Algonquin Park Museum (Box 219, Whitney, Ontario K0J 2M0). In addition, any sighting which approaches or exceeds the extreme dates of occurrence for a species should be reported as well.

Birders are encouraged to visit the Park Museum in order to obtain advice on finding birds in the Park, and to advise staff of their sightings.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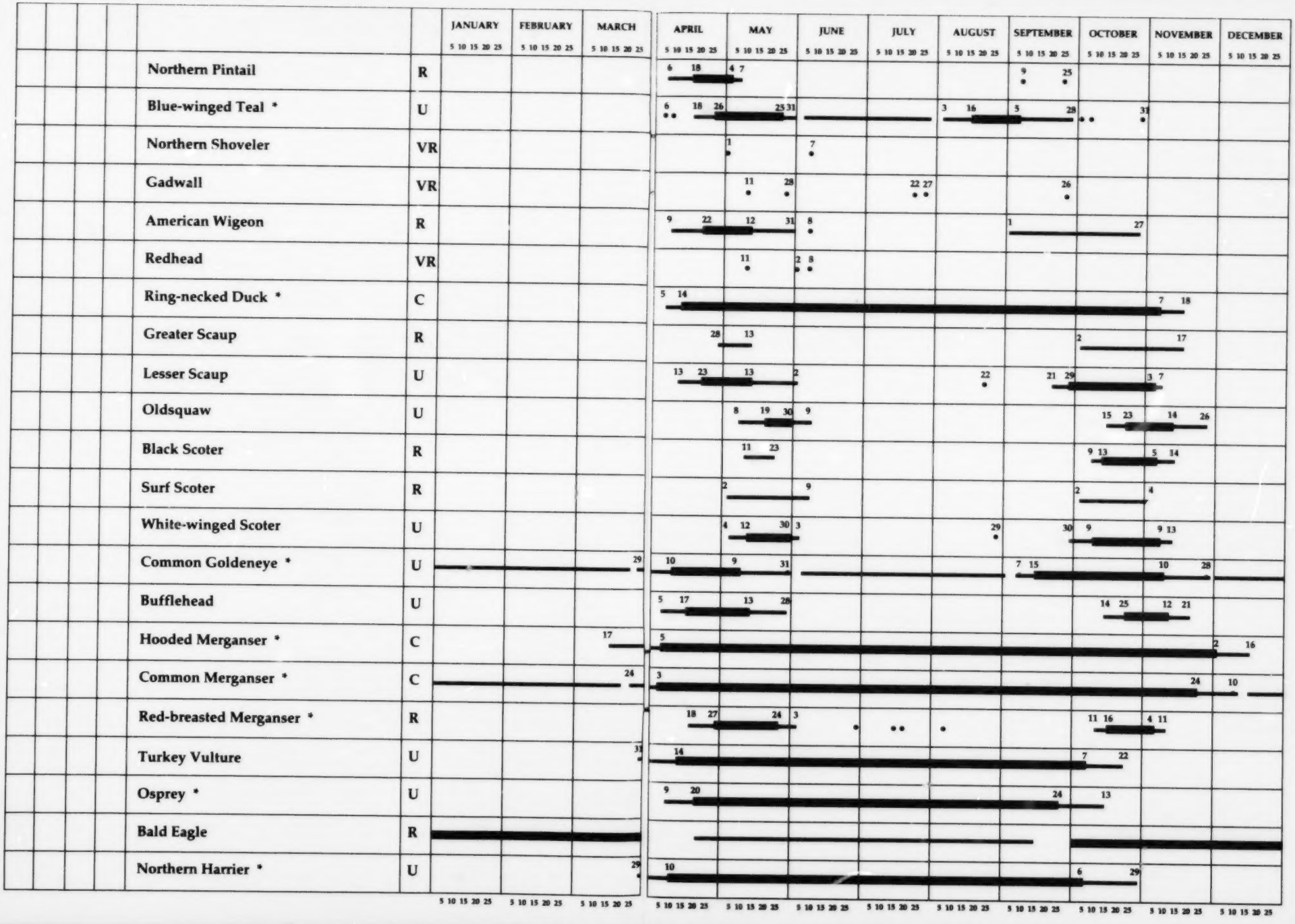
5 10 15 20 25
Common Loon * C
Pied-billed Grebe * R
Horned Grebe R
Red-necked Grebe U
American White Pelican A
Double-crested Cormorant VR
American Bittern * C
Least Bittern VR
Great Blue Heron * C
Great Egret VR
Snowy Egret A
Green-backed Heron R
Black-crowned Night-Heron VR
Tundra Swan VR
Mute Swan A
Snow Goose VR
Brant U
Canada Goose C
Wood Duck * C
Green-winged Teal U
American Black Duck * C
Mallard * C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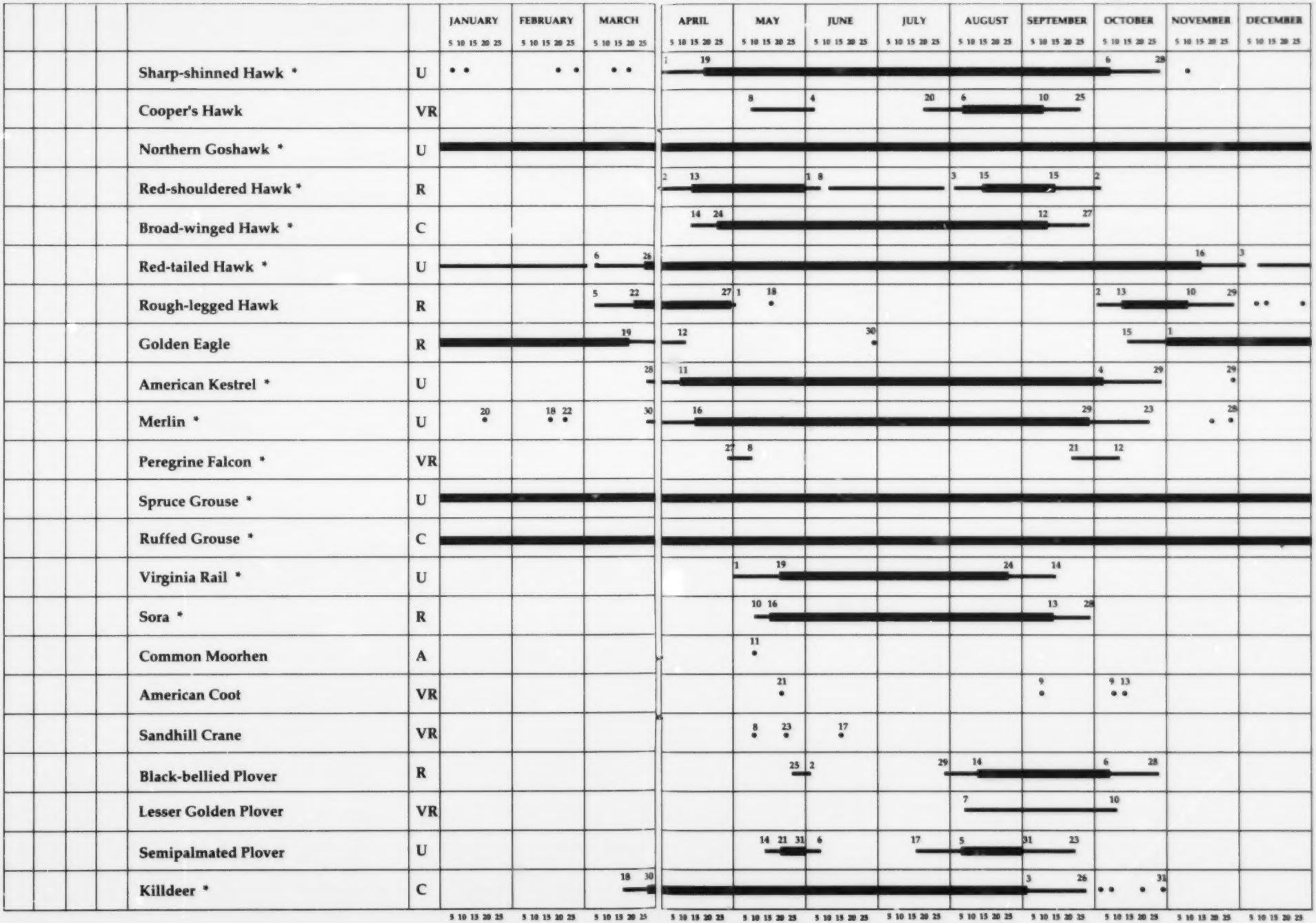
5 10 15 20 25
Northern Pintail R
Blue-winged Teal * U
Northern Shoveler VR
Gadwall VR
American Wigeon R
Redhead VR
Ring-necked Duck * C
Greater Scaup R
Lesser Scaup U
Oldsquaw U
Black Scoter R
Surf Scoter R
White-winged Scoter U
Common Goldeneye * U
Bufflehead U
Hooded Merganser * C
Common Merganser * C
Red-breasted Merganser * R
Turkey Vulture U
Osprey * U
Bald Eagle R
Northern Harrier * U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5 10 15 20 25
Sharp-shinned Hawk * U
Cooper's Hawk VR
Northern Goshawk * U
Red-shouldered Hawk * R
Broad-winged Hawk * C
Red-tailed Hawk * U
Rough-legged Hawk R
Golden Eagle R
American Kestrel * U
Merlin * U
Peregrine Falcon * VR
Spruce Grouse * U
Ruffed Grouse * C
Virginia Rail * U
Sora * R
Common Moorhen A
American Coot VR
Sandhill Crane VR
Black-bellied Plover R
Lesser Golden Plover VR
Semipalmated Plover U
Killdeer * C

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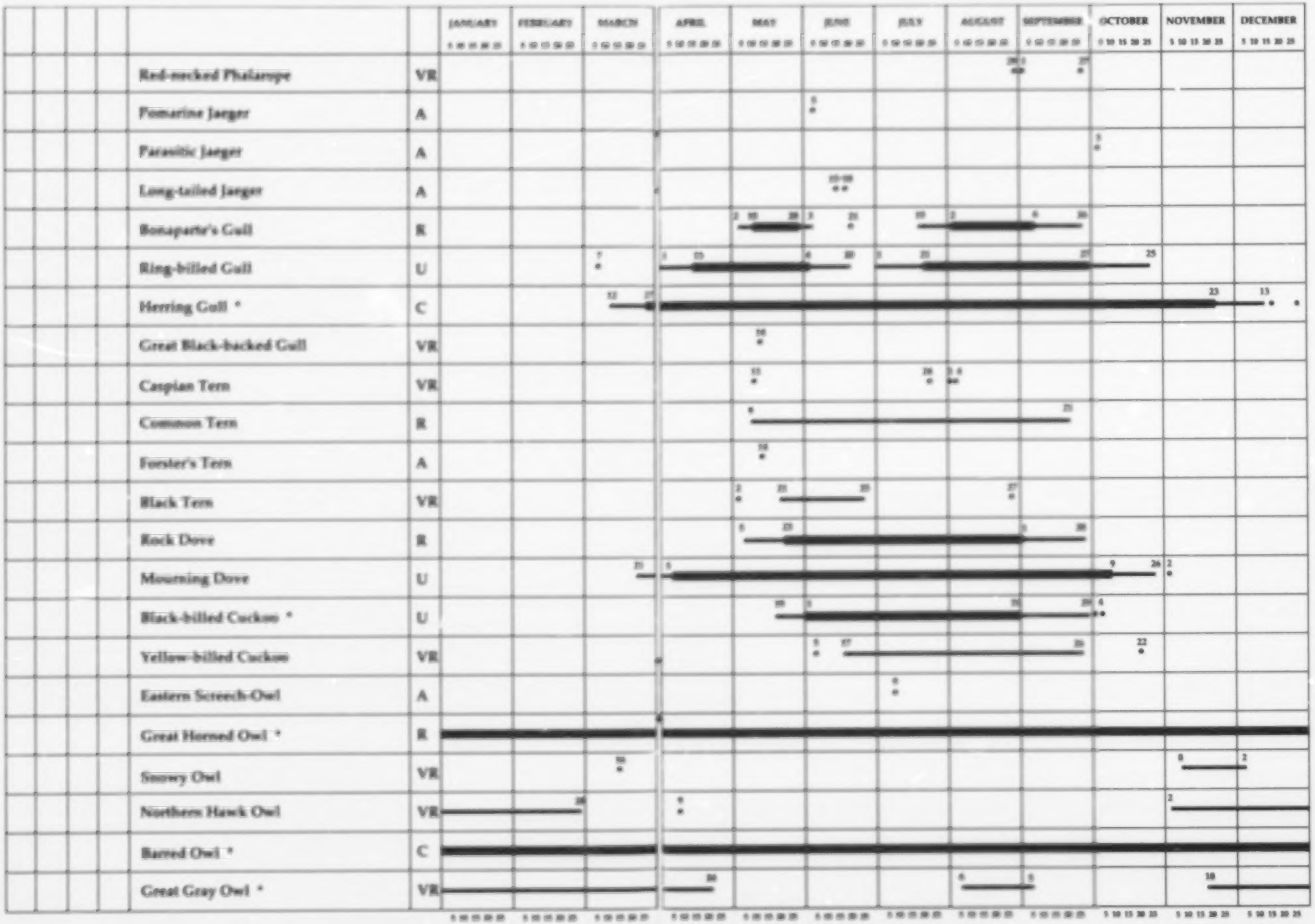
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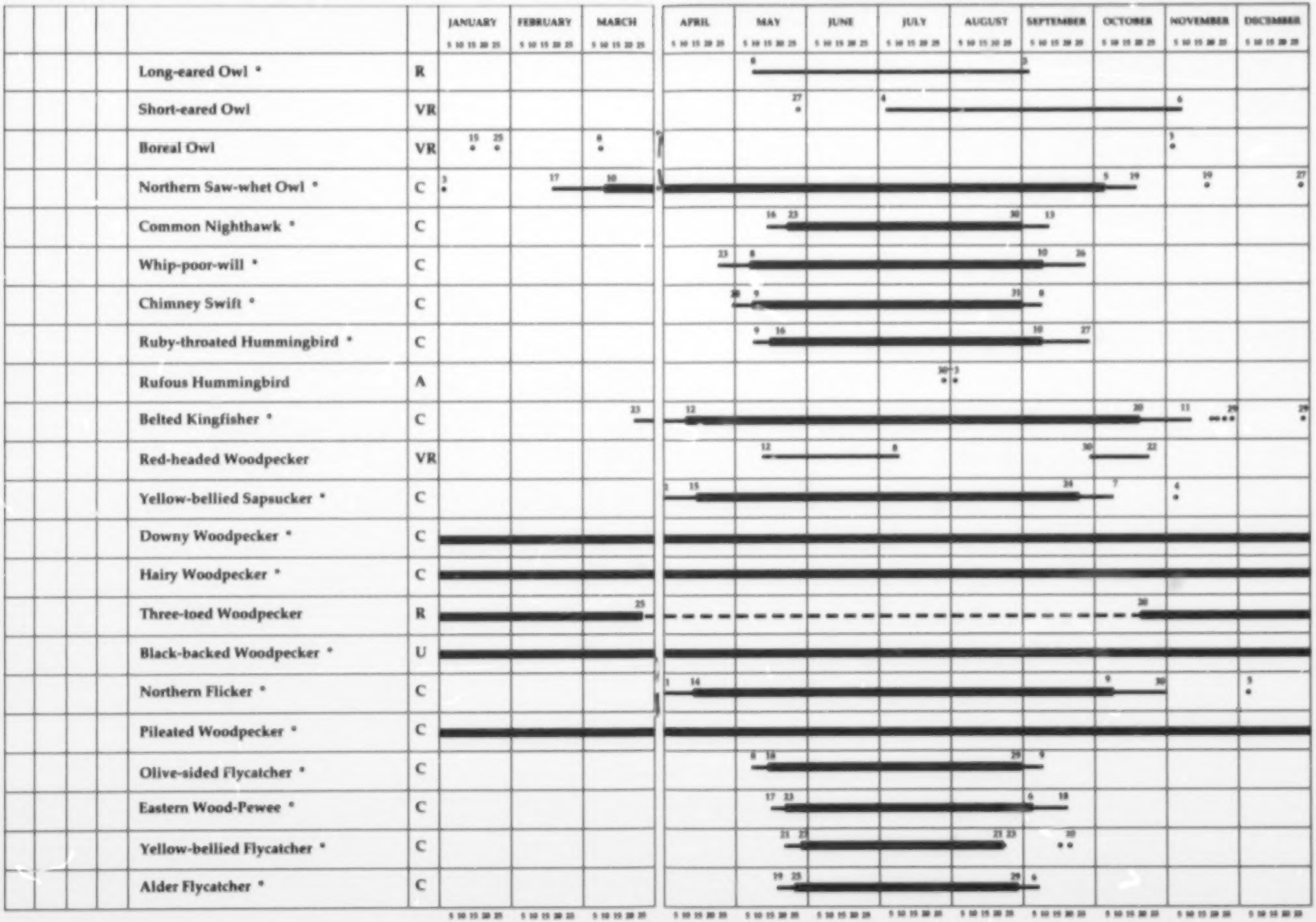
Red-necked Phalarope
Pomarine Jaeger
Parasitic Jaeger
Long-tailed Jaeger
Bonaparte's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull *
Great Black-backed Gull
Caspian Tern
Common Tern
Forster's Tern
Black Tern
Rock Dove
Mourning Dove
Black-billed Cuckoo *
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Eastern Screech-Owl
Great Horned Owl *
Snowy Owl
Northern Hawk Owl
Barred Owl *
Great Gray Owl *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Long-eared Owl *
Short-eared Owl
Boreal Owl
Northern Saw-whet Owl *
Common Nighthawk *
Whip-poor-will *
Chimney Swift *
Ruby-throated Hummingbird *
Rufous Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher *
Red-headed Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *
Downy Woodpecker *
Hairy Woodpecker *
Three-toed Woodpecker
Black-backed Woodpecker *
Northern Flicker *
Pileated Woodpecker *
Olive-sided Flycatcher *
Eastern Wood-Pewee *
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher *
Alder Flycatcher *
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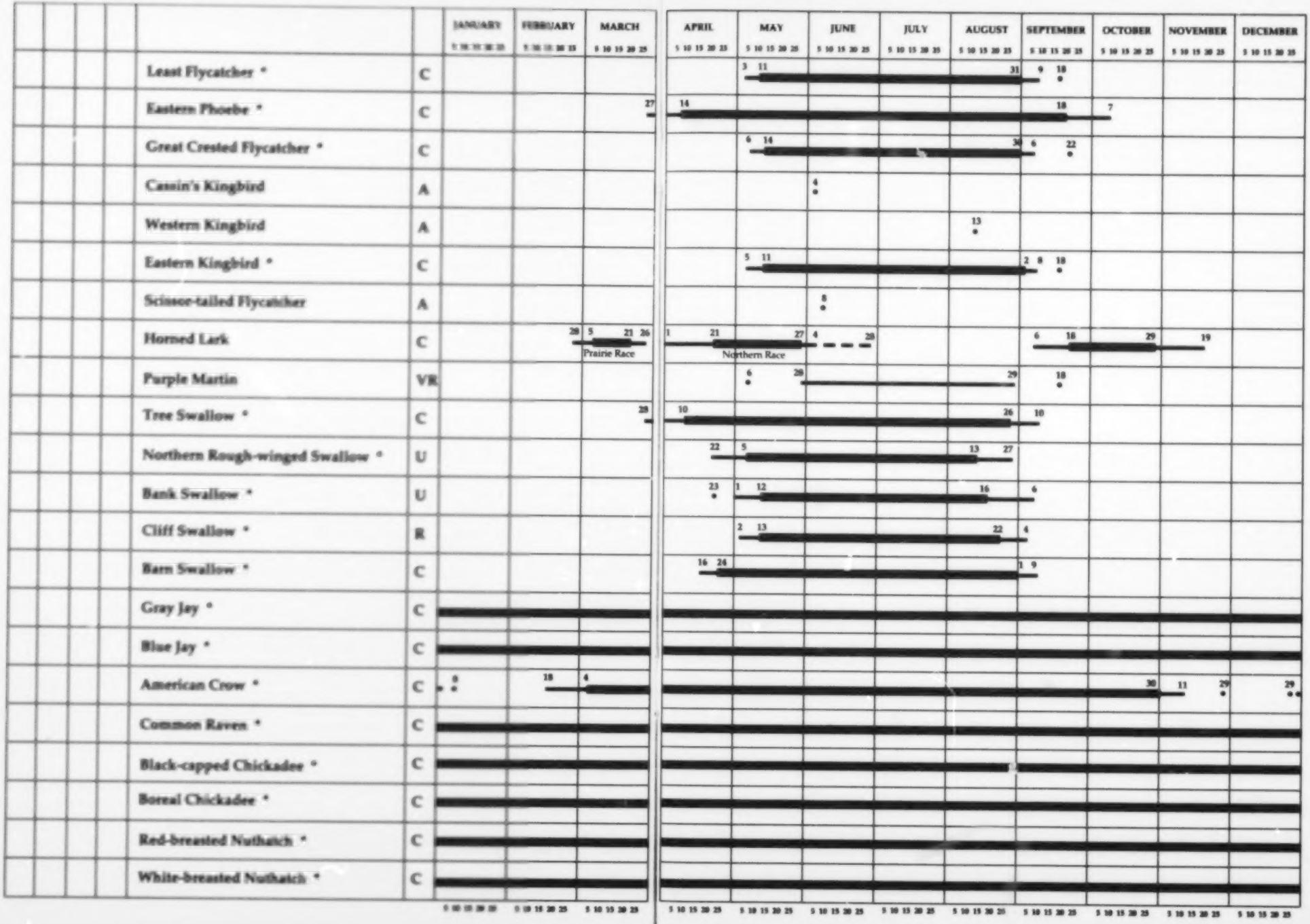
JANUARY
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Least Flycatcher *
Eastern Phoebe *
Great Crested Flycatcher *
Cassin's Kingbird
Western Kingbird
Eastern Kingbird *
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Horned Lark
Prairie Race
Northern Race
Purple Martin
Tree Swallow *
Northern Rough-winged Swallow *
Bank Swallow *
Cliff Swallow *
Barn Swallow *
Gray Jay *
Blue Jay *
American Crow *
Common Raven *
Black-capped Chickadee *
Boreal Chickadee *
Red-breasted Nuthatch *
White-breasted Nuthatch *

						JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
						5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25
				Brown Creeper *	C			
				House Wren *	VR			
				Winter Wren *	C			26
				Sedge Wren	R			
				Marsh Wren	A			
				Golden-crowned Kinglet *	C			25
				Ruby-crowned Kinglet *	C			
				Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	A			
				Eastern Bluebird *	U			30
				Veery *	C			
				Gray-cheeked Thrush	R			
				Swainson's Thrush *	C			
				Hermit Thrush *	C			
				Wood Thrush *	C			
				American Robin *	C			6 25
				Varied Thrush	A			
				Gray Catbird *	C			
				Northern Mockingbird	R			
				Brown Thrasher *	U			
				American Pipit	C			
				Bohemian Waxwing	VR			
				Cedar Waxwing *	C			
						5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25

APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25
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6 18						16	7	
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10 23						16	11	
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	10 17				23	12	19	
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15	4				4 25			36 31
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	18 24				24	10 28		21
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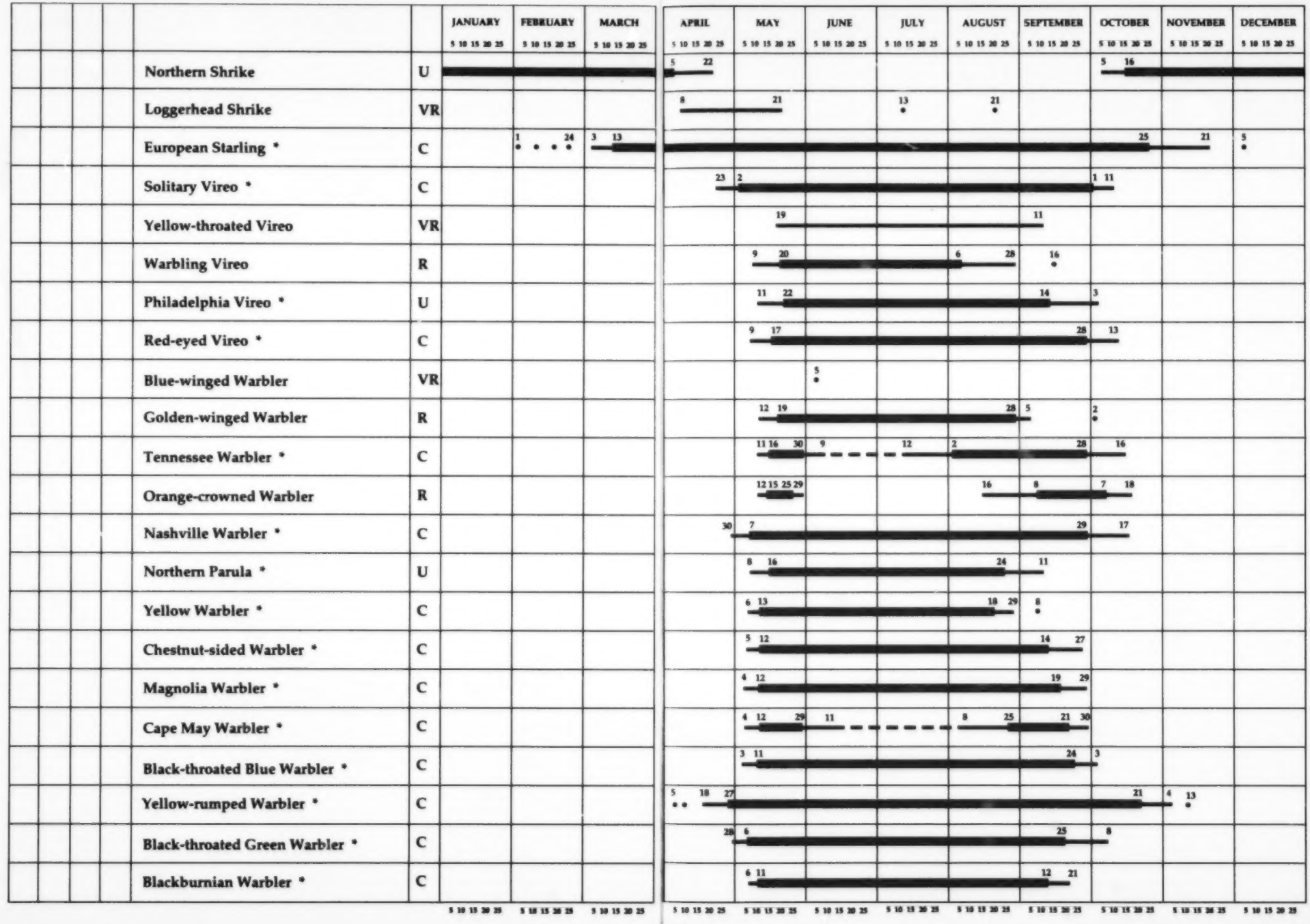
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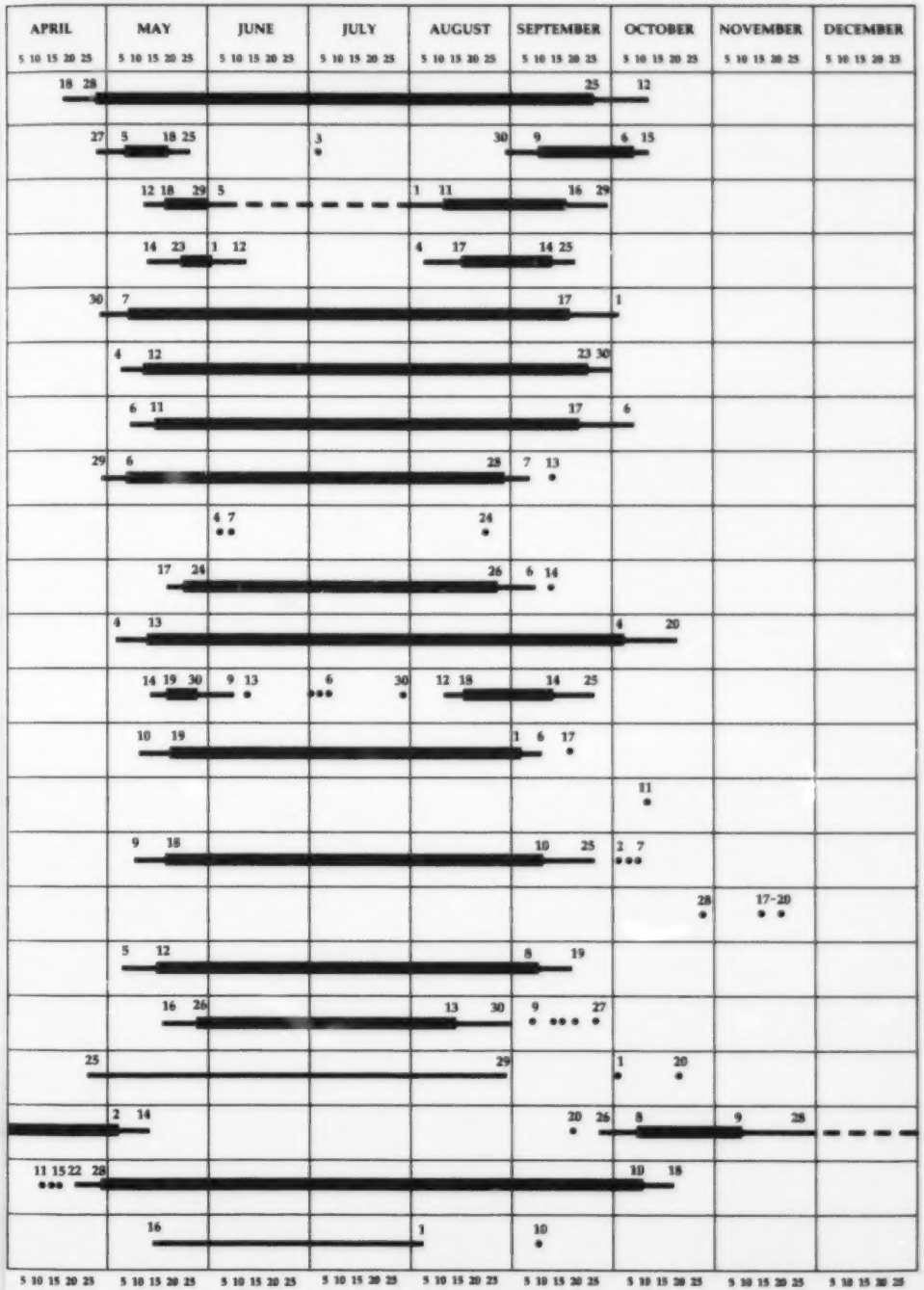
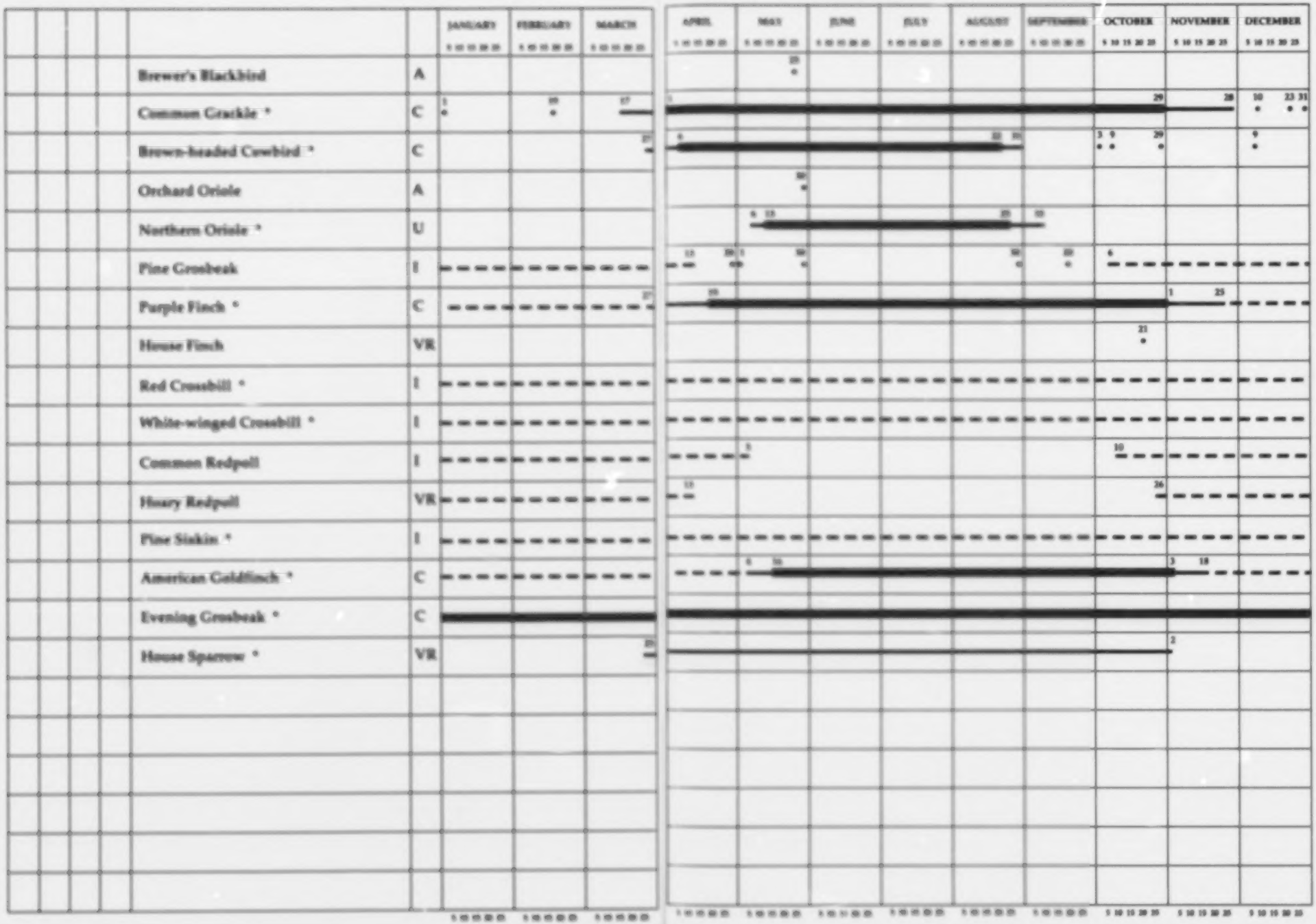
5 10 15 20 25
Northern Shrike U
Loggerhead Shrike VR
European Starling * C
Solitary Vireo * C
Yellow-throated Vireo VR
Warbling Vireo R
Philadelphia Vireo * U
Red-eyed Vireo * C
Blue-winged Warbler VR
Golden-winged Warbler R
Tennessee Warbler * C
Orange-crowned Warbler R
Nashville Warbler * C
Northern Parula * U
Yellow Warbler * C
Chestnut-sided Warbler * C
Magnolia Warbler * C
Cape May Warbler * C
Black-throated Blue Warbler * C
Yellow-rumped Warbler * C
Black-throated Green Warbler * C
Blackburnian Warbler * C

						JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
						5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25
				Pine Warbler *	C			
				Palm Warbler	C			
				Bay-breasted Warbler *	U			
				Blackpoll Warbler	R			
				Black-and-white Warbler *	C			
				American Redstart *	C			
				Ovenbird *	C			
				Northern Waterthrush *	C			
				Connecticut Warbler	VR			
				Mourning Warbler *	C			
				Common Yellowthroat *	C			
				Wilson's Warbler	U			
				Canada Warbler *	C			
				Yellow-breasted Chat	A			
				Scarlet Tanager *	C			
				Northern Cardinal	VR			
				Rose-breasted Grosbeak *	C			
				Indigo Bunting *	U			
				Rufous-sided Towhee	VR			
				American Tree Sparrow	C			9 28
				Chipping Sparrow *	C			
				Clay-colored Sparrow *	VR			
						5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25	5 10 15 20 25



						JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
				Field Sparrow *	R				9 24	7				26	9		
				Vesper Sparrow *	U				15 24						2 10		
				Lark Sparrow	A										8 13		
				Lark Bunting	A					25							
				Savannah Sparrow *	C				1 6 20						11 15		
				Grasshopper Sparrow	VR					20	30						
				Le Conte's Sparrow	VR					23 29							
				Sharp-tailed Sparrow	VR										10		
				Fox Sparrow	U				1 13 28 5						2 7 22	5	
				Song Sparrow *	C			5 12	2						21	10	
				Lincoln's Sparrow *	U					6 11 20				30	13	28	
				Swamp Sparrow *	C				9 17 24						19	9	29
				White-throated Sparrow *	C	3	8								19	4	26
				White-crowned Sparrow	C					29 7 23 29	23			11 20	20	1	26 29
				Dark-eyed Junco *	C			12 30								11	29
				Lapland Longspur	U				4 22	25 4				14 22	10	5 15	
				Snow Bunting	C			4 25	26	13	3			21	1 16	19	29
				Bobolink *	U					6 16				3 13 29			
				Red-winged Blackbird *	C			10 25							27	5	
				Eastern Meadowlark	U			20	7	14 27		25	14		14	3 5	
				Western Meadowlark	VR					10	12				24		
				Rusty Blackbird *	C			14 28	11						22	4	30 30


JANUARY
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Brewer's Blackbird A
Common Grackle * C
Brown-headed Cowbird * C
Orchard Oriole A
Northern Oriole * U
Pine Grosbeak I
Purple Finch * C
House Finch VR
Red Crossbill * I
White-winged Crossbill * I
Common Redpoll I
Hoary Redpoll VR
Pine Siskin * I
American Goldfinch * C
Evening Grosbeak * C
House Sparrow * VR

Other Algonquin Park Publications

This technical bulletin is only one of many publications published in cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources by The Friends of Algonquin Park. The Friends is an independent registered charitable organization with a volunteer board of directors and was established in 1983 to assist the Park with its educational and interpretive programs.

The following is a list of other Friends' publications available at our two bookstores located at the Park Museum and the Pioneer Logging Exhibit or by writing to the address below.

	(1990) Price
MAPS	
Canoe Routes of Algonquin Provincial Park	$2.75
Backpacking Trails of Algonquin Provincial Park	1.50
BOOKS	
Fishing in Algonquin Provincial Park	$1.50
Birds of Algonquin Provincial Park	2.95
Mammals of Algonquin Provincial Park	1.50
Reptiles and Amphibians of Algonquin	1.00
Pictorial History of Algonquin Provincial Park	1.50
Wildflowers of Algonquin Provincial Park	2.50
Mushrooms of Algonquin Provincial Park	2.50
Trees of Algonquin Provincial Park	2.95
TRAIL GUIDES	
Whiskey Rapids Trail	$0.45
Hardwood Lookout Trail	0.45
Mizzy Lake Trail	0.45
Peck Lake Trail	0.45
Hemlock Bluff Trail	0.45
Two Rivers Trail	0.45
Lookout Trail	0.45
Booth's Rock Trail	0.45
Spruce Bog Boardwalk	0.45
Beaver Pond Trail	0.45
Barron Canyon Trail	0.45
Brent Crater Trail	0.45
TECHNICAL BULLETINS	
No. 1, Checklist of the Butterflies of Algonquin	$0.75
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